

# New name for Blairhaven

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The name "Blairhaven" has been on the tips of many residents' tongues over the past several months, after a controversial town meeting vote to buy the former waterfront retreat on Standish Shore. It won't be for long, however, as the name has been changed to "Howland's Landing Park."

The name change is one of the few things that has been finalized so far regarding the property, although the study committee appointed to outline a clear purpose for the land has been meeting weekly.

In March, Town Meeting voted to purchase the five-acre property with \$3.5 million in Community Preservation Act funds. The vote itself was controversial (the initial vote failed to get a 2/3 majority and only passed on reconsideration) and many critics felt there wasn't a clear idea of what the property would be used for. In recent weeks, the study committee had explored using an existing building for meeting space/recording storage or a satellite harbor master's office, but after an opinion from town counsel, the buildings are coming down and the land will be used for passive recreation.

The closing on the property was scheduled for Friday, but it has been pushed back to July 19 to clear up a title issue, according to Town Manager Richard MacDonald. He described the issue as a house-keeping item and expects no further problems.

The study committee has been working on two large tasks: to create a "conservation restriction" for the land, a document that will be filed with the state; and a series of local rules and regulations that will be directly controlled by the Board of Selectmen.

Committee member Pat Loring has some experience with conservation restrictions and the group is currently evaluating her first draft. Last Wednesday, they continued to wrestle with the rules and regulations.

Many of the rules are fairly standard for public open space in Duxbury. Although nothing will be officially adopted until the selectmen vote on it, the hours at Howland's Landing park will be sunrise to sunset, and parking will be limited to two hours. Alcohol, trailers and fires will be prohibited, as will be camping, hunting or any type of commercial enterprise. The board also discussed noise regulations.

All of the rules will be available at Town Hall, and some of the most important ones will be on a sign at the park, including a general introduction about conservation land.

"I like the introduction that you're welcome to this property," said Loring.

"It's a positive type sign that encourages use of the property in a sensitive way," added Conservation Agent Joe Grady.

Since the existing buildings will be removed, the septic system on the site will be crushed in and removed.

There was some discussion about bicycles, which will be prohibited on the property itself but there will be a bike rack in the parking lot to encourage people to bike to Howland's Landing Park — just not through it.

Parking at the site will be limited to Duxbury residents only, and Harbor Master Don Beers said that things like a beach or dump sticker would be sufficient. He said he's had nannies and au pairs bring children to other waterfront parks,

as long as they have a note from the homeowner.

"Even a Duxbury Lacrosse sticker has been known to work," he said. "They just have to prove they're a resident."

Beers said the issue of dinghy and prams (the park is next to a town landing) will be addressed in a more town-wide sense — in the near future, the town will require all such boats to be permitted.

"We need to control that, because it's expensive to the taxpayers," he said.

Beers also explained the non-criminal citations his department would be issuing (similar to speeding tickets) for violations of these rules and regulations, similar to what happens now on the beach. Town Meeting would have to vote to add them to the existing rules to decriminalize them.

"I don't think they want any criminal disposition here," said Committee Chairwoman Betsy Sullivan.

"This is a no brainer," added Michael Gill.

The next meeting will be July 27.